



## **Resources Committee**

### **Minutes of meeting held on 11 January 2023 (via Microsoft Teams)**

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## **Present**

### **Members**

Anthony McGeehan, Deputy Crown Agent (Operational Support) (Chair)

Keith Dargie, Head of Business Services & Chief Digital Officer

Marlene Anderson, Director of Finance and Procurement

Sarah Carter, HR Director

Graham Kerr, Head of Business Management (Local Court)

Thomas Lindie, Head of Business Management (Serious Casework)

Jonathan Shebioba, Director of Support Services

Elaine Hales, Head of Business Management (Operational Support)

Clair Lumgair, Senior Finance Business Partner

### **Apologies**

Sharon Davies, Head of Management Accounting and Planning

### **Secretariat**

Ian Palmer, Finance and Procurement Executive Assistant

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed the group and apologies were noted.

## 2. Minutes from meeting held on 29 November 2022

The Committee approved the minutes as accurate.

## 3. Action Log

No outstanding actions listed.

## 4 (a) Finance Update - Budget 2022/23

DFP (MA) presented **RC Paper 04 (2023)**

A general overview was given which included:

Forecast for 2022-23 has been completed.

Current residual underspend of £398k which has moved from £4k forecast in October 2022. This has resulted largely from external Counsel and legal advice costs in major casework being lower than anticipated.

Non staffing expenditure is a projected overspend of £943k.

Contributory factors include:

- Increased costs through larger volume of court business post COVID.
- Increased costs and impact of inflation e.g. estates costs, ad hoc advocates, pathology and mortuary costs, kennelling costs.

Finance Partners and Business Management colleagues continue to scrutinise all non-staff costs and identify any possible counter inflationary measures.

Staff overtime working continues to be strictly controlled.

After general discussion the Committee approved the paper.

## 4 (b) Finance Update - Budget 2023/24

DFP (MA) presented **RC Paper 05 (2023)**

A general overview was given which included:

- SG announced the COPFS 2023/24 budget on 15 December 2022.
- £13m increase in Resource budget and a £3m increase in Capital funding.

General discussion followed focusing on identifying savings, flexibilities and efficiencies, reducing non-staff costs, optimising management of casework and energy and fuel consumption efficiencies.

Further work is ongoing to determine allocation of budgets for 2023-24 to relevant budget holders for recommendation to Executive Board for approval.

The Committee approved the paper.

## 5. Finance Strategy update

DFP (MA) presented **RC Paper 06 (2023)**

Its purpose was to refresh current finance strategy to reflect the current economic climate.

The Committee welcomed the paper and general discussion followed.

JS suggested that the paper should also reflect the following issues

- Location rationalisation – Impact of decreasing estates footprint against a background of increasing staff complement
- Net Zero Carbon funding.

Subject to these proposed additional items being incorporated, the Committee were content for the paper to be published.

### Action

**MA and JS to discuss the final wording of proposed additional text.**

## 6. AOB

### Vehicle Hire Policy

DFP (MA) raised an issue in relation to the COPFS policy on hiring vehicles for official purposes. There have been a number of instances where a hire vehicle has been delivered to a staff member's home address and the hire company claim subsequently that the vehicle sustained damage whilst in the custody of that driver.

It is difficult for COPFS to refute any such claims if inadequate (or no) evidenced checks are made at the time of delivery. In order to prevent this, it is intended that the terms of the COPFS policy (dating from 2016) will be strictly enforced and that all hire vehicles must be delivered to a COPFS premises for collection by the nominated driver.

This will facilitate an appropriate vehicle condition check to be made at the time of delivery.

#### Action

**MA is arranging for a staff communication to be issued outlining the rationale for this decision.**

### Payment of Witness Expenses

DFP (MA) raised an issue in relation to the payment of witness expenses claims. Whilst staff in Finance strive to have these claims processed within target of 10 days of receipt by them, instances have been noted where there appears to have been a significant delay in local offices submitting forms to Finance.

#### Action

**GK and TL are to investigate reason for any delay in witness expenses claims being forwarded to Finance and take any remedial action required.**

### KPI

JS raised an issue in relation to the publication of departmental key performance indicators. It was confirmed that this data is published on the COPFS website and annual accounts.

### Procurement Update

GK advised that the report would be available at the next Resources Committee Meeting on **9 February 2023**.